



Work Package 4

Survey of International Development Staff and Activities in VET

Synthesis Transnational Report



Unternehmen für Bildung.



Centre for Innovation in Education

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1. Aims and approach

The aims of the survey were to investigate the education, knowledge, skills and training required to be an effective International Development Officer (IDO) in the vocational education and training (VET) sector. The survey also sought to investigate how informal and non formal learning could be validated and to consider labour market possibilities for IDOs.

At Work Meeting 1, partners discussed the content and design of the survey. After further consultation, the final survey structure was agreed and partners distributed it to a sample of IDOs within their country. After collating results, partners wrote a country report.

The following report summarises the results of research in the partner countries; identifies common strands and individual country needs and puts forward recommendations for designing competence based qualifications (Work Package 5). Finally, links with other work packages and next steps are stated. Appendix 1 includes an overall summary of survey responses. Individual country reports and survey summaries can be found in Appendix 2.

2. Questionnaire sample and research methodology

A total of 137 individuals from Finland, France, Germany, Romania, Greece, Italy and the UK responded with each country achieving more than the minimum quota of 15. An additional 19 responses were obtained via the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EfVET) from Spain, Lithuania, Denmark and the Netherlands.

The majority (34%) of respondents worked for vocational colleges, with 25% working for education authorities, 16% for private training organisations and 25% for a range of other organisations including higher education.

A variety of roles was represented including international coordinators, managers and vocational teachers. The percentage of time spent on international activities was fairly evenly split between full and part time roles. The majority of respondents (59%) had been in the role for more than 3 years.

To compile this report, we used a combination of desk research, electronic questionnaires, phone calls and discussions with respondents.

3. Summary of research findings

- **Current education and training**

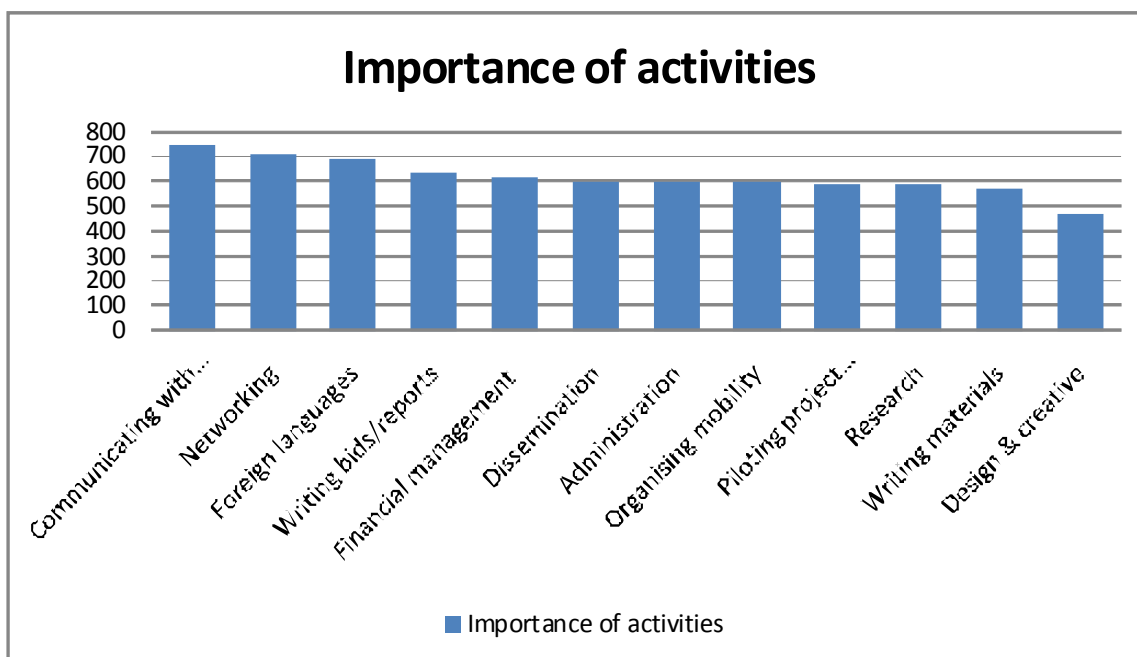
Levels of education and formal qualifications were high with 86% having a University degree, 46% a foreign language qualification and 33% another formal qualification, e.g. competence related.

Informal, unstructured training had been undertaken by most respondents (90%) with 50% having had non-formal, planned training. This indicates that there is scope to validate informal and non formal training.

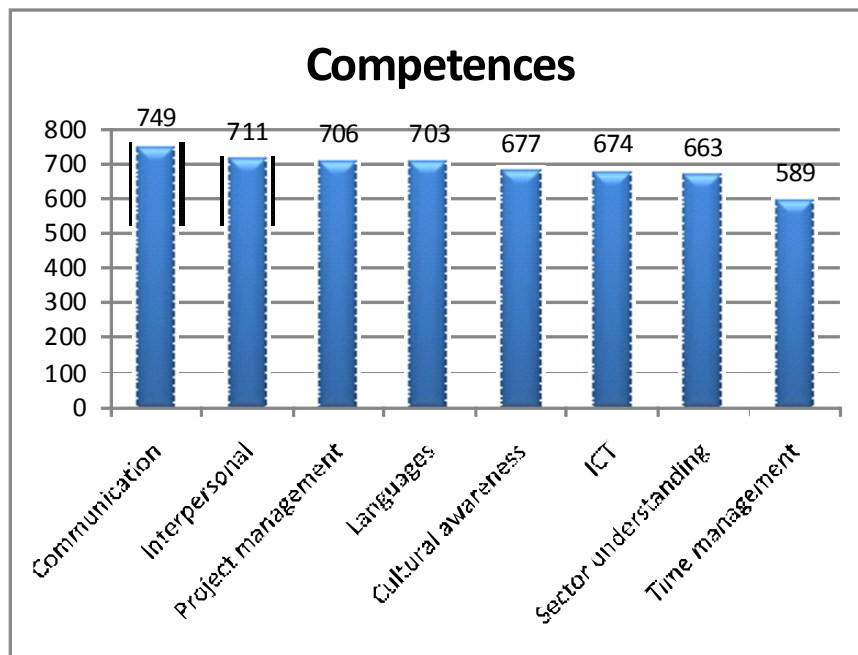
Only 7% of respondents were aware of any formal qualifications for the IDO role and there appears to be a general lack of information in this area. Qualifications identified included general project management courses, for example, which were not specifically in the field of education and ad hoc courses in specific areas. Some training is provided by national and other agencies.

- **Activities and competences**

The most important activities were seen to be communicating with others, networking and communicating in a foreign language. Least important activities were design and creative work, writing materials and organising and conducting research. However, as can be seen in the graph below, there is not much difference between the ranking of activities which indicates the variety of the role and wide range of skills required.



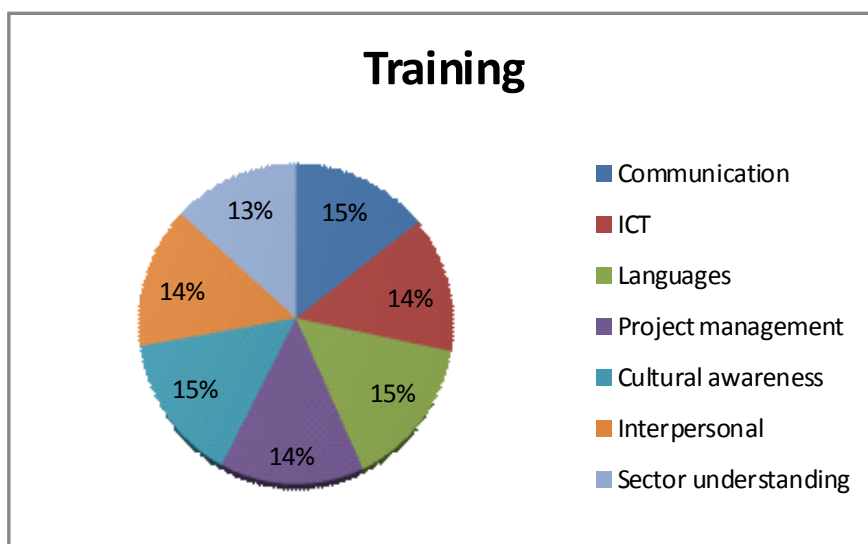
The top three key competences ranked as communication (verbal and written), interpersonal (teamwork, motivating others) and project management. As with the activities in the previous chart, all competences have relatively high scores with the exception of time management (however this competence was not scored by the group from Finland). A link between the activities and competences is apparent particularly in terms of communication and interpersonal skills.



To develop these key competences, a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding was identified (please see question 10 in individual country summaries Appendix 2 for more detail). The amount of information respondents were willing to give to this question indicates the need for training and the level of interest in the project. There is clearly a need for flexibility in the role as with project work, for example, different fields of knowledge are required for each project and the role provides a great deal of scope for professional development.

- **Key training needs**

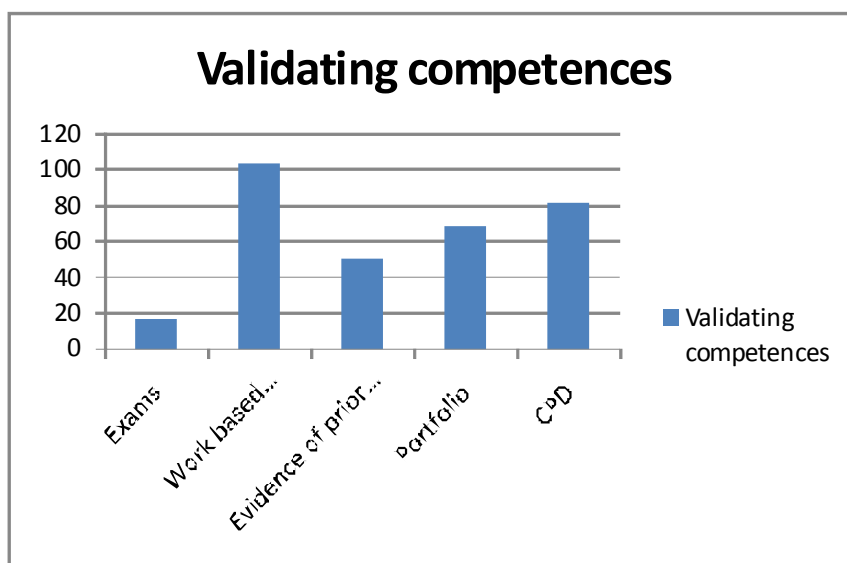
Use of foreign languages, cultural awareness and communication (verbal and written) were the most important areas identified for specific training. However, all identified areas had relatively high scores as can be seen in the chart below.



Understanding European policies and systems and developing intercultural competences were also identified as key training needs.

- **Validation of training and labour market possibilities**

The majority (66%) of respondents felt that competences should be validated via work based assessment, followed by continuing professional development, portfolio and evidence of prior learning. Only 11% of respondents felt that examinations were appropriate.



This may be because many IDOs take on international responsibilities voluntarily as part of their professional development and have developed their skills through non formal and informal learning.

In terms of labour market possibilities, there was seen to be a need for transferable skills in the international arena. Work placements in different international organisations could help develop skills and a network of IDOs could also prove to be a useful forum for identifying opportunities for progression.

4. Specific country needs

The organisation of vocational education and training varies across partner countries as can be seen in individual partner reports such as Romania. In Italy, for example, regional and national validation systems for competences are being developed in line with the European Qualification Framework (EQF). In Germany, the EQF has not yet been introduced in the VET sector. In Greece, a system for accrediting occupational profiles is under development but there is no national system for validating informal or non formal learning. Such national variations will need to be taken into account when we seek to find ways to validate the competences of the IDO.

A range of courses have been identified which are relevant to IDO training. In the UK, for example, the National Agency runs useful seminars, supporting literature, a helpdesk and website for IDOs. Start-up seminars for Leonardo and Grundtvig projects and contact seminars to find European partners are organised. In France, it is felt that there are existing curricula which match the learning outcomes of the IDO on which we could build.

A key difference in the UK results compared to other partner countries is the importance placed on communicating in a foreign language. On further questioning, respondents felt that other European partners tend to speak English so there is not often a need or opportunity to speak other languages.

The following picture of the Finnish IDO helps to explain the motivation of the individual in line with this project's objectives: "Academic education, often that of a language teacher, hard working in international activities, having a management job. Female, been in international jobs more than 3 years."

5. Recommendations

The need for a more structured approach to the training and development of IDOs comes across in the findings. Current training is mainly non formal and informal and is largely unrecognised. Training both at the start of an international career and continuing professional development with recognition for prior learning and work based assessment are recommended.

We should examine what already exists in terms of courses and qualifications particularly in terms of international project management and intercultural competences. This should provide a useful starting point for course development and recognition of prior learning. As suggested by our French partner, the work from previous European projects such as INTENT and VALEURTECH on intercultural management should also be considered. Research by our partner in Germany identified international project management competences on which we could build (see country report for more detail).

We should also consider how competences such as cultural awareness, communication and interpersonal skills could be acquired and developed to avoid the focus of training being on the more practical aspects of the role.

Additional training areas for consideration include: European policies and strategies, understanding of national and international systems and quality assurance.

Methods of delivery should be considered. As part of the IDO's training, mobility within an international organisation was felt to be beneficial. Mentoring from an experienced IDO was also felt to be effective. Online courses, platforms for IDO discussions and an online good practice guide should also be considered.

There are clearly many benefits from an IDO developing their role in terms of personal development and impact on their organisation and others around them. These benefits should be emphasised to relevant organisations as we develop our project.

6. Links with other work packages and next steps

The results of the survey already provide useful information for further study on the Set of Skills for IDOs. A significant number of respondents indicated that they were interested in further discussions. From these, interviews took place to provide more in depth analysis of the IDO skills set. Results will be available in a separate document. The results of this report and further interviews will contribute to the development of competence based qualifications in Work Package (WP) 5.

The results of this research should also contribute towards the development of WP7 training package and good practice guide.

By involving others in the research, we have also worked towards our dissemination objectives in WP 9 and should continue to keep respondents up to date on project progress.

The consideration of wider international development training rather than VET specific could be investigated further in WP 10 Exploitation of results.

Appendix 1. Overall summary of survey responses.

1. How would you describe your organisation?

	%
a) Vocational college	34
b) Private training organisation	16
c) Education authority	25
d) Other	25

2. Please state your role in the organisation

	%
a) International project or mobility coordinator	32
b) Vocational teacher with international responsibility	21
c) Manager with international responsibility	25
d) Other	22

3. What percentage of your working week do you spend on international activities?

	%
a) Less than 50%	50
b) 50-75%	29
c) More than 75%	21

4. How long have been in this role?

	%
a) Less than a year	13
b) 1-3 years	28
c) More than 3 years	59

N.B. No response from Finland to this question

5. Please state any formal qualifications for your role

	% of total respondents
a) University degree	86
b) Foreign language qualification	46
c) Other formal qualification e.g. competence related	33

6. Please state any training for your role

	% of total respondents
a) Non formal i.e. planned activities	50
b) Informal i.e. experience gained on the job, unstructured	90

7. Please state your country

	Number of respondents
a) Denmark	1
b) Finland	26
c) France	26
d) Germany	16
e) Greece	16
f) Italy	16
g) Lithuania	15
h) Netherlands	1
i) Romania	20
j) Spain	2
k) UK	17

CURRENT SITUATION

8. From your experience in an international role, how important are the following activities? (1 = not at all important, 5 = very important)

	Score	Rank
a) Networking	709	2
b) Writing bids and reports	631	4
c) Organising and conducting research	584	10
d) Organising dissemination activities	602	6
e) Organising mobility exchanges	597	8
f) Communicating with others	742	1
g) Communicating in a foreign language	688	3
h) Writing materials	568	11
i) Design and creative work	467	12
j) Piloting project products	585	9
k) Administration	599	7
l) Financial management	621	5
m) Other		

9. In your opinion, how important are the following competences for being an International Development Officer? (1 = not at all important, 5 = very important)

	Score	Rank
a) Communication (verbal & written)	749	1
b) ICT (use of technology & the internet)	674	6
c) Use of foreign languages	703	4
d) Interpersonal (teamwork, motivating others)	711	2
e) Project management	706	3
f) Time management	589*	8
g) Cultural awareness	677	5
h) Understanding education sector you represent	663	7
i) Other		

10. What do you see as the key areas of knowledge, skills and understanding required to be an effective International Development Officer? Please base your answer on the competences you identified as most important in the previous question.

Please see individual country reports and summaries for range of responses

11. Do any formal qualifications for the International Development Officer role exist in your country?

	%
Yes,	7
No	43
Don't know	50

THE FUTURE

12. In your opinion, to what extent do you think specific training in the following areas is needed to be an effective International Development Officer?

	Score	Rank
a) Communication (verbal & written)	652	3
b) ICT (use of technology & the internet)	618	6
c) Use of foreign languages	672	1
d) Interpersonal e.g. teamwork, motivating others	645	4
e) Project management e.g. time management	644	5
f) Cultural awareness	658	2
g) Understanding education sector you represent	602	7
h) Other		

13. Any other gaps or training needs you identify?

Please see individual country reports and summaries for range of responses

14. What do you see as the most effective way of validating the competences which individuals have developed?

	% of total respondents
a) Examinations	11
b) Work based assessment	66
c) Evidence of prior learning	33
d) Portfolio	43
e) Continuing professional development	52
f) Other	

15. Please use this space to write any other thoughts or ideas you have about how the training and development of International Development Officers could be improved and the labour market possibilities for IDOs.

Please see individual country reports and summaries for range of responses

If you are interested in discussing your ideas further, please fill in your details below:

Name (optional):

Contact details (optional):

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Appendix 2 Country reports and survey summaries

Please see the IDOLearn website <http://www.idolearn.net> for individual partner country reports and survey summaries.